

## **Exhibit D**

# **CDC Emails Provided Pursuant to Freedom of Information Act Request**

**From:** Jorgensen, Cynthia (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Mon, 16 Aug 2021 13:43:26 +0000  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** lanaguage?

(b)(5)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 4:35 PM  
**To:** Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <llx2@cdc.gov>; LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <lox3@cdc.gov>; St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <ibx9@cdc.gov>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <qvl8@cdc.gov>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Do you all have recommended updates for the content?

(b)(5)

Alycia

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**From:** Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 3:47 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>; LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>; St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Hi Alycia,

People have been asking us if COVID-19 vaccines are not technically vaccines. They often cite that page as CDC's definition for what counts as a vaccine. Here are a few examples (more in the attached spreadsheets):

- Is it true that this shot for Covid is not actually a vaccine per your definition? Does this shot make you immune to the Covid virus? If not, why should I get the shot?
- Reading the CDC's definition of vaccine is says "...to produce immunity to a specific disease..." Everything you read today says this shot doesn't give you immunity but helps a person fight off the infection. Our question is how is the CDC and the rest of the world allowed to call the shot a vaccination when it doesn't even meet your own definition
- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm> The definition of the word vaccine used on this page states that a vaccine produces immunity. Further, immunity is defined as being exposed to it (the pathogen) without becoming infected. There are several vaccines, including the new COVID vaccines that do not produce immunity as defined. Would it be possible for you to update the page to be more clear on the definition of a vaccine? I was directed to this page by someone attempting to use it as proof that the EUA COVID vaccines are not really vaccines since they do not provide immunity as defined on the linked page. Hopefully this can help clear up some disinformation that has been spread during the pandemic.
- Please update the definition of vaccine on your website found at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm> People are citing this as proof that the mRNA vaccines are not really vaccines. The definition needs to include new technological advances (miriam webster has done this). Thanks
- Right-wing covid-19 pandemic deniers are using your "vaccine" definition to argue that mRNA vaccines are not vaccines: Here is the definition from the CDC website: Vaccine: A product that stimulates a person's immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but can also be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose. The phrase "to produce immunity" was interpreted to mean "complete" or "perfect" immunity. This was twisted to claim that the existing covid-19 vaccines were not vaccines because they only prevented severe illness. I think it would be more accurate to say that a vaccine function is "to stimulate an immune response" to be clear that perfect immunity is not what defines a vaccine.

Best,  
Andrew

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 3:29 PM

**To:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>; St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>

**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Yes, there are a few of these pages we are reviewing.

What are the questions coming in?

Alycia

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**From:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 2:56 PM  
**To:** St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>; Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Adding Alycia – Alycia we’ve talked about this page/section of pages recently. See below.

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**From:** St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 2:53 PM  
**To:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Marcie, who own this page- [Immunization Basics | CDC?](#)

**JACQUIE ST JAMES, MPH | Web Designer/ UX Writer**

Peraton | Health Protection Solutions  
Contractor for NCIRD  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
O: 404-498-2683 | C: 404-502-4231 | [ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)

---

**From:** Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 2:49 PM  
**To:** St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Who owns this page?

Hi Jacquie,

(b)(5)

Thank you!  
Lauren

Lauren Witbart | M.Ed. | Ed.S. | MPH



[NCIRD](#) | HCSO  
VTF | [Data Unit](#)

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Wed, 25 Aug 2021 20:23:59 +0000  
**To:** NCIRDwebteam (CDC)  
**Subject:** RE: CDC INFO; Topic Glossary entry for &quot;vaccine&quot; is too narrow; [CDC-1962483-B1N3Y9] CRM:00701034

I have a few requests out to (b)(5)

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**From:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <lox3@cdc.gov> **On Behalf Of** NCIRDwebteam (CDC)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2021 4:20 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: CDC INFO; Topic Glossary entry for &quot;vaccine&quot; is too narrow; [CDC-1962483-B1N3Y9] CRM:00701034

Oy – another page <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/terms/glossary.html#v>

Requestor is suggesting we update to match imz-basics. (b)(5)

Please broaden the glossary entry for "vaccine" (<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/terms/glossary.html#v>) to match the definition on the CDC Immunization Basics page: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm>

The too-narrow definition in the Glossary is being used by anti-vaxxers to spread the lie that the mRNA COVID vaccines are not "vaccines."

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**From:** NIPINFO (CDC) <[NIPINFO@cdc.gov](mailto:NIPINFO@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2021 2:26 PM  
**To:** NCIRDwebteam (CDC) <[nipweb@cdc.gov](mailto:nipweb@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: CDC INFO; Topic Glossary entry for &quot;vaccine&quot; is too narrow; [CDC-1962483-B1N3Y9] CRM:00701034

Hi webteam,

I'm not sure where to forward this comment on content on our website (not sure who "owns" the glossary content).

Would you please either share the comment with the appropriate office?

I will write back to the inquirer to thank him for the comment on behalf of NIPINFO.

THANK YOU in advance,

Suzanne for NIPINFO

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**From:** CDCInfo <[cdcinfo@cdcinqury.onmicrosoft.com](mailto:cdcinfo@cdcinqury.onmicrosoft.com)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2021 2:08 PM  
**To:** (b)(6)

**Subject:** CDC INFO; Topic Glossary entry for "vaccine" is too narrow; [CDC-1962483-B1N3Y9]  
CRM:00701034

Thank you for contacting CDC-INFO.

Your comments have been forwarded to the appropriate CDC program for their information.

*\*\*\*Feedback about your experience with CDC-INFO is important to us and will help us continue to improve. Please rate your interaction by completing this short survey:*

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/FKXRCG5?CaseId=CDC-1962483-B1N3Y9>

*Responses are kept completely confidential.\*\*\**

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Thank you for contacting CDC-INFO. For more information, please call 1-800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), visit [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and click on "Contact CDC-INFO," or go to [www.cdc.gov/info](http://www.cdc.gov/info). This e-mail was sent from an unmonitored mailbox, and CDC-INFO will not respond to replies sent to this mailbox. If you have questions or comments, please send them via our online form at [www.cdc.gov/info](http://www.cdc.gov/info).

CDC-INFO is a service of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry (ATSDR). This service is provided by the Verizon and MAXIMUS contract with CDC and ATSDR.

VG/11109

----- Original Message-----

Sent: 8/20/2021

From: General Public

Subject: Glossary entry for "vaccine" is too narrow

Email Address: (b)(6)

Question: Please broaden the glossary entry for "vaccine"

(<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/terms/glossary.html#v>) to match the definition on the CDC

Immunization Basics page: <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm>

The too-narrow definition in the Glossary is being used by anti-vaxxers to spread the lie that the mRNA COVID vaccines are not "vaccines."

### Optional Information

Name: (b)(6)

Title: (b)(6)

(b)(6)

Phone: (b)(6)

Other Email:

Address:

PII Extraction:



**From:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR)  
**Sent:** Wed, 1 Sep 2021 18:35:21 +0000  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics update - due by COB

Hi Alycia,

This request has been completed and pushed live:

[Immunization Basics | CDC](#)

Thanks,  
Mike

**James Michael Jones (Mike)**

*Health Communication Specialist/Weber Shandwick*  
Contractor for HCSO/NCIRD/CDC  
O: 404-718-5522 | C: 678-416-1541 | [oiw8@cdc.gov](mailto:oiw8@cdc.gov)

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 12:49 PM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** Immunization Basics update - due by COB

Hi Mike,

Please submit a ticket to get this definition updated ASAP on this page: [Immunization Basics | CDC](#)

Currently posted:

**Vaccine:** A product that stimulates a person's immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but can also be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

Update to:

**Vaccine:** A preparation that is used to stimulate the body's immune response against diseases. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but some can be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

Thanks!  
Alycia

**From:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR)  
**Sent:** Tue, 24 Aug 2021 18:28:42 +0000  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics

The date has been changed!

[Immunization Basics](#) | [CDC](#)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 2:17 PM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics

(b)(5) The  
definition of vaccine (b)(5)  
(b)(5)

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**From:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 2:14 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics

Your request: Changes to "Immunization Basics" page has been completed and pushed live.

[Immunization Basics](#) | [CDC](#)

Mike

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 11:59 AM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** Immunization Basics

On this page: [Immunization Basics](#) | [CDC](#)

Please delete (b)(5)

And delete:

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Due Friday, 8/27.

Thanks!

Alycia

**From:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR)  
**Sent:** Tue, 24 Aug 2021 18:02:22 +0000  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics

Okay - thanks very much.

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 2:01 PM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics

(b)(5)

-

This page will eventually redirect to another but we need to keep it for now.

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**From:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 1:45 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics

Hi Alycia,

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thanks,  
Mike

**James Michael Jones (Mike)**  
*Health Communication Specialist/Weber Shandwick*  
Contractor for HCSO/NCIRD/CDC  
O: 404-718-5522 | C: 678-416-1541 | [oiw8@cdc.gov](mailto:oiw8@cdc.gov)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 11:59 AM



**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[oiw8@cdc.gov](mailto:oiw8@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** Immunization Basics

On this page: [Immunization Basics | CDC](#)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Due Friday, 8/27.

Thanks!

Alycia

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Tue, 24 Aug 2021 18:19:27 +0000  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR)  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics

Thanks, I should have mentioned it before!

---

**From:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 2:19 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics

Of course – no problem.

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 2:17 PM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics

(b)(5) The  
definition of vaccin (b)(5)  
(b)(5)

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**From:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 2:14 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Immunization Basics

Your request: Changes to "Immunization Basics" page has been completed and pushed live.

[Immunization Basics | CDC](#)

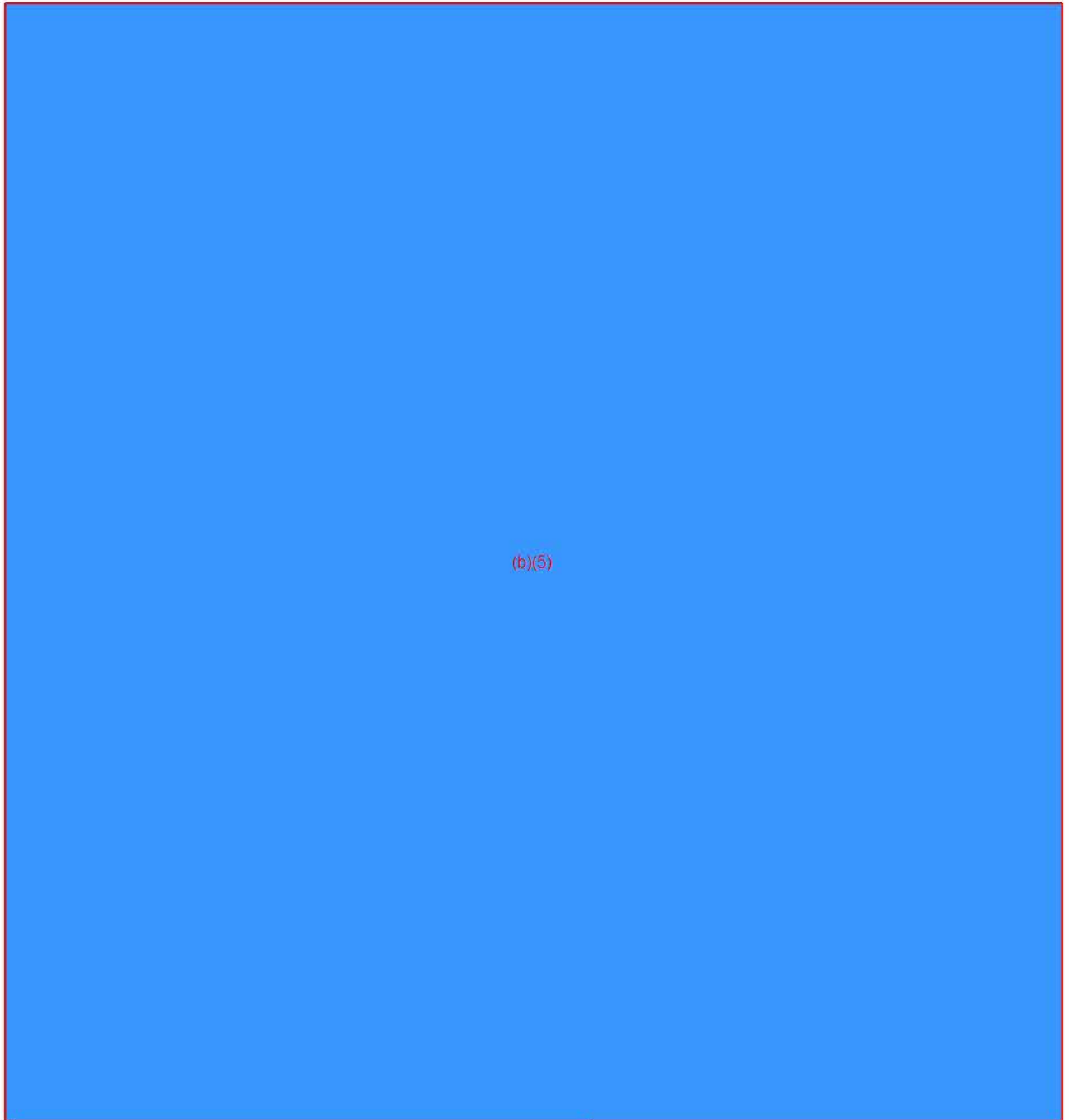
Mike

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 24, 2021 11:59 AM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** Immunization Basics

On this page: [Immunization Basics | CDC](#)

(b)(5)



(b)(5)



(b)(5)

Due Friday, 8/27.

Thanks!

Alycia



**From:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD)  
**Sent:** Thu, 9 Sep 2021 16:23:41 +0000  
**To:** Nordlund, Kristen (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD); Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD)  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-126231) fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine - NEW

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Andrew

Andrew Kroger MD, MPH  
Communication and Education Branch  
Immunization Services Division  
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Roybal Campus  
1600 Clifton Road, M/S A-19  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

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**From:** Nordlund, Kristen (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <hok4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Thursday, September 9, 2021 11:21 AM  
**To:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <aok2@cdc.gov>; Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-126231) fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine - NEW

Thanks Andrew. Two questions:

(b)(5)

Thanks,  
Kristen

---

**From:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <aok2@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 6:45 PM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Cc:** Nordlund, Kristen (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <hok4@cdc.gov>

**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-126231) fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine - NEW

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Andrew

Andrew Kroger MD, MPH  
Communication and Education Branch  
Immunization Services Division  
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Roybal Campus  
1600 Clifton Road, M/S A-19  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

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**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 4:24 PM

**To:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[aok2@cdc.gov](mailto:aok2@cdc.gov)>

**Cc:** Nordlund, Kristen (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[hok4@cdc.gov](mailto:hok4@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** FW: Issue (MIS-126231) fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine - NEW

Andrew – (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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**From:** Nordlund, Kristen (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[hok4@cdc.gov](mailto:hok4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 2:42 PM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[yhb3@cdc.gov](mailto:yhb3@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Issue (MIS-126231) fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine - NEW

Valerie,

We have a fact check from Miami Herald about a tweet calling out the change in CDC's definition of "vaccine" on the website. Are you okay if we provide the below?

(b)(5)

Thanks,  
Kristen

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**From:** NMB Media Inquiry System (CDC) <[misjira@cdc.gov](mailto:misjira@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 10:48 AM  
**To:** Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC) <[pvq2@cdc.gov](mailto:pvq2@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Issue (MIS-126231) fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine - NEW

Inquiry [MIS-126231](#) has been created and assigned to **Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC)** .

[Mobile Link](#) | [Details](#)

**Priority:** Normal

**Deadline DateTime:** 2021-09-08 16:34:00.0

**Summary:** fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine

**Status:** PO Review

**Media Outlet :** [MiamiHerald]

**Team:** Deputy Team

**Media Reporter:** Katie Camero

**Email Address:** [kcamero@mcclatchy.com](mailto:kcamero@mcclatchy.com)

**Inquiry Description:**

Hello,

It's spreading on [Twitter](#) that the CDC changed its definition of the term "vaccine," and some people are using that to say the COVID-19 vaccines do not work.

I see this [website](#) was last "reviewed" Sept. 1.

**Can the CDC clarify this change, explain why it was changed and share what the definition of "vaccine" was before.**

Regards,

—

Katie Camero

National Real-Time Team

Science Reporter, McClatchy

Twitter: [@camerokt\\_](#)

**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD)  
**Sent:** Wed, 8 Sep 2021 20:22:18 +0000  
**To:** Nordlund, Kristen (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Issue (MIS-126231) fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine - NEW

Can this wait until tomorrow - (b)(5)

(b)(5)

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**From:** Nordlund, Kristen (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <hok4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 2:42 PM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Cc:** Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <yhb3@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Issue (MIS-126231) fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine - NEW

Valerie,

We have a fact check from Miami Herald about a tweet calling out the change in CDC's definition of "vaccine" on the website. Are you okay if we provide the below?

(b)(5)

Thanks,  
Kristen

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**From:** NMB Media Inquiry System (CDC) <[misjira@cdc.gov](mailto:misjira@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 8, 2021 10:48 AM  
**To:** Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC) <[pvq2@cdc.gov](mailto:pvq2@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Issue (MIS-126231) fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine - NEW

Inquiry [MIS-126231](#) has been created and assigned to **Pauley, Scott (CDC/OD/OADC)** .

[Mobile Link](#) | [Details](#)

**Priority:** Normal

**Deadline DateTime:** 2021-09-08 16:34:00.0

**Summary:** fact checking social media claim of CDC changing its definition of vaccine

**Status:** PO Review

**Media Outlet :** [MiamiHerald]

**Team:** Deputy Team

**Media Reporter:** Katie Camero

**Email Address:** [kcamero@mcclatchy.com](mailto:kcamero@mcclatchy.com)

**Inquiry Description:**

Hello,

It's spreading on [Twitter](#) that the CDC changed its definition of the term "vaccine," and some people are using that to say the COVID-19 vaccines do not work.

I see this [website](#) was last "reviewed" Sept. 1.

**Can the CDC clarify this change, explain why it was changed and share what the definition of "vaccine" was before.**

Regards,

—

Katie Camero

National Real-Time Team

Science Reporter, McClatchy

Twitter: [@camerokt\\_](#)



**From:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR)  
**Sent:** Wed, 1 Sep 2021 18:57:54 +0000  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

I'll see if we can get this done right now!

Thank you very much!  
Mike

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 2:57 PM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Need to update vaccine definition on website

[Immunization Basics | CDC](#)

Currently posted:

**Vaccination:** The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease.

Please update to:

**Vaccination:** The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce protection from a specific disease.

And please have the date last reviewed updated. Thanks Mike!

If this can get done today, that'd be great but if not next week will work. Thanks again and enjoy the

(b)(6) this weekend!

Alycia

---

**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 1:06 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

If this is for the general public I am good with the change

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 1:00 PM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5)

**Vaccination:** The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease.

(b)(5)

**From:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR)  
**Sent:** Wed, 1 Sep 2021 19:34:12 +0000  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

You're all set – your requested changes have been completed and pushed live:

[Immunization Basics | CDC](#)

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 2:57 PM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Need to update vaccine definition on website

[Immunization Basics | CDC](#)

Currently posted:

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Please update to:

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And please have the date last reviewed updated. Thanks Mike!

If this can get done today, that'd be great but if not next week will work. Thanks again and enjoy the wedding this weekend!

Alycia

---

**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 1:06 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 1:00 PM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Does this definition need to be updated as well?

**Vaccination:** The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease.

(b)(5)

**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD)  
**Sent:** Wed, 1 Sep 2021 17:06:14 +0000  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 1:00 PM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Does this definition need to be updated as well?

**Vaccination:** The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease.

(b)(5)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 4:09 PM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Great. Thanks Valerie!

---

**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 4:06 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5)

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**From:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <aok2@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 3:53 PM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5)

Andrew

Andrew Kroger MD, MPH  
Communication and Education Branch  
Immunization Services Division  
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Roybal Campus  
1600 Clifton Road, M/S A-19  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

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**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 2:46 PM  
**To:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[aok2@cdc.gov](mailto:aok2@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Need to update vaccine definition on website  
**Importance:** High

Are you ok with this change – if you open the attachment you can click on the link to the page this is relevant to – it is a general public definition page

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2021 8:25 AM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Hi Valerie,

I know you are busy so I really appreciate your help. The definition of vaccine we have posted is problematic and people are using it to claim the COVID-19 vaccine is not a vaccine based on our own definition. Does the updated version look okay to you? Thank you!

Currently posted:

**Vaccine:** A product that stimulates a person's immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but can also be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

(b)(5)



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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 19, 2021 11:56 AM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Need to update vaccine definition on website

Hi Valerie,

(b)(5)

Alycia

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Fri, 10 Sep 2021 12:29:19 +0000  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR)  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(6)

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**From:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 8:28 AM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5), (b)(6)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 8:27 AM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 8:04 AM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Mike,

(b)(5)

Alycia

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 2:57 PM  
**To:** Jones, James (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <oiw8@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** FW: Need to update vaccine definition on website

[Immunization Basics](#) | [CDC](#)

Currently posted:

**Vaccination:** The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease.

Please update to:

**Vaccination:** The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce protection from a specific disease.

And please have the date last reviewed updated. Thanks Mike!

If this can get done today, that'd be great but if not next week will work. Thanks again and enjoy the (b)(6) this weekend!

Alycia

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**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 1:06 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 1:00 PM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Does this definition need to be updated as well?

**Vaccination:** The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease.

(b)(5)

**From:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) on behalf of NCIRDwebteam (CDC)  
**Sent:** Wed, 15 Sep 2021 17:42:20 +0000  
**To:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD); NCIRDwebteam (CDC); Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

Perfect, sent to the requestor and cc'ed nipinfo  
Thank you!

---

**From:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 1:40 PM  
**To:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <lox3@cdc.gov>; NCIRDwebteam (CDC) <nipweb@cdc.gov>; Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

Here is a response to this inquiry.  
Thanks for your patience.

Thank you for your inquiry. CDC updated the definition of a vaccine to improve the clarity of this information. Thank you again for contacting CDC.

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**From:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 9:09 AM  
**To:** NCIRDwebteam (CDC) <[nipweb@cdc.gov](mailto:nipweb@cdc.gov)>; Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[zhk0@cdc.gov](mailto:zhk0@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

Following up on the email below.

---

**From:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) **On Behalf Of** NCIRDwebteam (CDC)  
**Sent:** Monday, September 13, 2021 3:39 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[zhk0@cdc.gov](mailto:zhk0@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

Question below about a recent update to our fav page <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm>

See highlighted question from user below

Could you please provide a response and send to nipweb and nipinfo so we have it for our records if needed? thank you!

---

**From:** NIPINFO (CDC) <[NIPINFO@cdc.gov](mailto:NIPINFO@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Monday, September 13, 2021 11:49 AM

**To:** NCIRDwebteam (CDC) <[nipweb@cdc.gov](mailto:nipweb@cdc.gov)>

**Cc:** NIPINFO (CDC) <[NIPINFO@cdc.gov](mailto:NIPINFO@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

Hi webteam,

Could you please help me find the office/person who “owns” the content on this webpage, so I can forward along this inquiry?

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm>

Thanks!

Suzanne for NIPINFO

---

[CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

----- Original Message-----

Sent: 9/7/2021

From: General Public

Subject: Change in definition

Email Address: (b)(6)

Question: Hi,

I’m just seeking clarification as to why the definition of a vaccine was changed from “a product that stimulates a persons immune system to produce immunity” to “a preparation that is used to stimulate the body’s immune response”.

Thanks

(b)(5)

### Optional Information

Name: (b)(6)

Title: (b)(6)

Organization:

Phone: (b)(6)

Other Email:

Address:

(b)(6)

PII Extraction:



**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Wed, 15 Sep 2021 17:42:05 +0000  
**To:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

(b)(5)

Alycia

---

**From:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 1:38 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

Thank you!  
Yes, I did read the article.

(b)(5)

Thanks!

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 1:33 PM  
**To:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

(b)(5)

? See my suggestions below.

(b)(5)

Alycia

---

**From:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 1:27 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>

**Subject:** RE: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

(b)(5)

Question: why did the definition of a vaccine change from “a product that stimulates a person’s immune system to produce immunity” to “a preparation that is used to stimulate the body’s immune response”

(b)(5)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 9:22 AM

**To:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>; NCIRDwebteam (CDC) <[nipweb@cdc.gov](mailto:nipweb@cdc.gov)>

**Cc:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[zhk0@cdc.gov](mailto:zhk0@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

Rosie, let's you and I discuss

---

**From:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, September 15, 2021 9:09 AM

**To:** NCIRDwebteam (CDC) <[nipweb@cdc.gov](mailto:nipweb@cdc.gov)>; Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>

**Cc:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[zhk0@cdc.gov](mailto:zhk0@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

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**Sent:** Monday, September 13, 2021 3:39 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[zhk0@cdc.gov](mailto:zhk0@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

Question below about a recent update to our fav page <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm>

See highlighted question from user below

Could you please provide a response and send to nipweb and nipinfo so we have it for our records if needed? thank you!

---

**From:** NIPINFO (CDC) <[NIPINFO@cdc.gov](mailto:NIPINFO@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, September 13, 2021 11:49 AM  
**To:** NCIRDwebteam (CDC) <[nipweb@cdc.gov](mailto:nipweb@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** NIPINFO (CDC) <[NIPINFO@cdc.gov](mailto:NIPINFO@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** SJD to webteam 9/13 - FW: RESPONSE REQUIRED; Priority Medium; Mode WebForm; Topic Change in definition; [CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

Hi webteam,

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<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm>

Thanks!

Suzanne for NIPINFO

---

[CDC-2019568-X5C2P8] CRM:00701417

----- Original Message-----

Sent: 9/7/2021

From: General Public

Subject: Change in definition

Email Address: (b)(6)

Question: Hi,

I'm just seeking clarification as to why the definition of a vaccine was changed from "a product that stimulates a persons immune system to produce immunity" to "a preparation that is used to stimulate the body's immune response".

Thanks

(b)(6)

**Optional Information**

Name: (b)(6)

Title: Builder

Organization:

Phone: (b)(6)

Other Email:

Address:

(b)(6)

PII Extraction:

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Wed, 18 Aug 2021 14:01:05 +0000  
**To:** Fisher, Allison Michelle (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Vaccines\_TheBasics\_updated

Thanks!

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**From:** Fisher, Allison Michelle (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[ark2@cdc.gov](mailto:ark2@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 18, 2021 10:00 AM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>; Jorgensen, Cynthia (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[cxj4@cdc.gov](mailto:cxj4@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Vaccines\_TheBasics\_updated

Yes, I thought the edits were good.

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 18, 2021 9:59 AM  
**To:** Fisher, Allison Michelle (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[ark2@cdc.gov](mailto:ark2@cdc.gov)>; Jorgensen, Cynthia (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[cxj4@cdc.gov](mailto:cxj4@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Vaccines\_TheBasics\_updated

Did my edits look okay, Allison?

(b)(5)

Alycia

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**From:** Fisher, Allison Michelle (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[ark2@cdc.gov](mailto:ark2@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 18, 2021 9:54 AM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>; Jorgensen, Cynthia (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[cxj4@cdc.gov](mailto:cxj4@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Vaccines\_TheBasics\_updated

(b)(5)



(b)(5)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 18, 2021 9:24 AM  
**To:** Jorgensen, Cynthia (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[cxj4@cdc.gov](mailto:cxj4@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Fisher, Allison Michelle (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[ark2@cdc.gov](mailto:ark2@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Vaccines\_TheBasics\_updated

(b)(5)

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**From:** Jorgensen, Cynthia (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[cxj4@cdc.gov](mailto:cxj4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, August 18, 2021 9:18 AM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Fisher, Allison Michelle (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[ark2@cdc.gov](mailto:ark2@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** FW: Vaccines\_TheBasics\_updated

Allison, can you take a quick look at this? I did talk to Kristin and she

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 2:01 PM  
**To:** Jorgensen, Cynthia (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[cxj4@cdc.gov](mailto:cxj4@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Vaccines\_TheBasics\_updated

This is my first draft of updates to the vaccine description and definitions. I certainly need some SME help.

Alycia



**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Fri, 10 Sep 2021 15:14:02 +0000  
**To:** CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries  
**Subject:** RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Thank you, Andrew! I really appreciate your response.

---

**From:** CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <eocevent546@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 11:01 AM  
**To:** Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>; Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>; Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>  
**Cc:** Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <yhb3@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Hi all,

I've only seen a couple inquiries about the change to this page. I think the WaPo article explains the problem well—that people are misinterpreting "immunity" to mean 100% protection. I thought this was an excellent observation by the author:

The irony of all of this is that the theories about what the change really means actually reinforce the idea that it's probably better to use "protection" than "immunity" — given that people don't seem to understand what "immunity" actually means.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best,  
Andrew

Vaccine Task Force (VTF) | Communications, CDC-INFO

COVID-19 Pandemic Response | [eocevent546@cdc.gov](mailto:eocevent546@cdc.gov)

---

**From:** Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 8:25 AM

**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>; Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[zhk0@cdc.gov](mailto:zhk0@cdc.gov)>

**Cc:** CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <[eocevent546@cdc.gov](mailto:eocevent546@cdc.gov)>; Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[yhb3@cdc.gov](mailto:yhb3@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Kate is out today. Andrew, when you get in can you weight in on what you see in CDCINFO and the definitions on

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/immunity-types.htm> - this page is being assessed as well. Any feedback from CDCINFO on this as well?

-----Original Message-----

From: Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>

Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 8:23 AM

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(b)(5)

(b)(5)

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Subject: RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Oh, awesome!! Thank you for being so on top of this!!

(b)(5)

We'll let

you know if we hear any feedback through CDCINFO.

Thank you!!

Lauren

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Sorry responded too early.

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Rosie, I'll let you take it from here.

Alycia

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(b)(5)

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Subject: RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Hey Lauren:



Yes, absolutely, we can prioritize reviewing the definitions page. Related, we have a team member reviewing <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/immunity-types.htm> -- so please let us know if you all have recommendations for updating that page.

(b)(6) and will be back in pocket Tuesday afternoon. Let me know if I need to get this moving in our queue before then.

Thanks. Rosie.

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Subject: FW: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Hi Rosie, How goes it?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Many thanks,  
Lauren

-----Original Message-----

From: Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[yhb3@cdc.gov](mailto:yhb3@cdc.gov)>

Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2021 5:24 PM

To: Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>

Subject: FW: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

This is what I was talking about earlier

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Cooper <[mcooper@panix.com](mailto:mcooper@panix.com)>

Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2021 4:25 PM

To: [cdc@panix.com](mailto:cdc@panix.com)

Subject: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

By Aaron Blake  
Senior reporter  
Today at 12:10 p.m. EDT

The forces seeking to undermine both the coronavirus vaccines and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's handling of them have landed on a new gotcha moment.

Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) has been one of Congress's biggest critics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the vaccination push. An intern recently resigned from his office over the congressman comparing vaccine "passports" to the Holocaust. (Massie later deleted the tweet.)

On Wednesday, Massie elevated something others had noticed in the days prior: that the CDC had updated a definition of "vaccination" on one of its webpages. As of late August, the page described vaccination as "The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease" (emphasis ours). The definition has since been changed from producing "immunity" to producing "protection."

"Check out @CDCgov's evolving definition of 'vaccination,'" Massie said. He then dropped another comparison -- to George Orwell's 1984: "They've been busy at the Ministry of Truth."

The tweet has gone somewhat viral, with more than 9,000 retweets and more than 19,000 likes. Other social media posts noting the change have also been shared widely among the vaccine-skeptic community.

The idea is that the CDC is watering down the definition of vaccination in response to the coronavirus vaccines proving less effective against infection from the delta variant than previously. (The vaccines, however, remain very good at preventing serious cases and hospitalizations.).

"After the Covid-19 vaccines were introduced, and it was discovered they do not necessarily 'prevent disease' or 'provide immunity,'" says the website of longtime vaccine skeptic and former CBS News journalist Sharyl Attkisson, "CDC altered the definition of vaccines again to say that they merely 'produce protection.'"

Massie responded to a critic by stating that "the goal posts have moved." Some have even suggested that the definition needed to be changed to still consider the coronavirus vaccines to be vaccines at

all.

It's interesting that the CDC changed the Web page. But as for the conclusions being drawn about its significance? Those leave a lot to be desired, and they rest upon continual misrepresentations and misunderstandings of what vaccination and "immunity" are supposed to mean.

From the start of the vaccination campaigns, critics have searched long and hard for evidence that the vaccines don't work as well as they were supposed to. This has sometimes involved suggesting that anything less than 100 percent efficacy means they don't work.

In truth, though, medical experts have long said that no vaccine, including the coronavirus vaccines, is 100 percent effective. If "immunity" connotes complete protection, then no vaccine actually provides it.

Part of the reason people seem to believe immunity means 100 percent protection stems from how it's understood in other contexts. Legally speaking, immunity from things like prosecution means you can't be prosecuted, full stop. But in a medical contexts, it's often used as a synonym for a specific type of protection -- i.e. the same word the CDC now uses.

The Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary defines immunity as "a condition of being able to resist a particular disease." Taber's Medical Dictionary defines it as, "Protection from diseases, [especially] from infectious diseases." Harvard's medical dictionary defines it as, "The body's ability to resist infection and disease." The Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary echoes all of them, saying immunity is "the body's ability to resist infection."

(These definitions, it bears noting, have not been changed recently.)

The data clearly shows the coronavirus vaccines meet these definitions of providing immunity, as do other vaccines with less than 100 percent efficacy. Those include the flu vaccines, whose efficacy is generally around 40 percent. The flu vaccines are still vaccines and still provide immunity -- just not complete immunity.

And to the extent this is some supposed grand conspiracy to move the goal posts on the coronavirus vaccines, it would also be a very incomplete one. Throughout its website, the CDC still refers to the coronavirus vaccines providing immunity:

\* On a page debunking myths about the coronavirus vaccines, which was updated this week, it still says, "After getting vaccinated, you develop immunity to that disease."



\* On another page devoted to explaining the coronavirus vaccines, it uses "protection" and "immunity" as synonyms multiple times, saying, "It typically takes 2 weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19."

\* On another page: "COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19 without us having to get the illness."

The irony of all of this is that the theories about what the change really means actually reinforce the idea that it's probably better to use "protection" than "immunity" -- given that people don't seem to understand what "immunity" actually means.

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Others, though, seem to be deliberately obfuscating. On Wednesday, the same day Attkisson's website suggested that the change was made because perhaps the vaccines don't "provide immunity," it updated another post acknowledging that immunity is indeed a relative term.

Of course, it did so in the service of making another argument Massie and others have focused on: that the immunity from infection provides more protection than, in its own words, "vaccine-induced immunity."

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Fri, 10 Sep 2021 16:24:46 +0000  
**To:** CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries  
**Subject:** RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Good idea, thank you!

---

**From:** CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <eocevent546@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 12:18 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** Re: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

(b)(5)

Andrew

Vaccine Task Force (VTF) | Communications, CDC-INFO

COVID-19 Pandemic Response | [eocevent546@cdc.gov](mailto:eocevent546@cdc.gov)

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 11:14 AM  
**To:** CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <[eocevent546@cdc.gov](mailto:eocevent546@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Thank you, Andrew! I really appreciate your response.

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**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 11:01 AM  
**To:** Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>; Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>; Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[zhk0@cdc.gov](mailto:zhk0@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[yhb3@cdc.gov](mailto:yhb3@cdc.gov)>  
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Hi all,

I've only seen a couple inquiries about the change to this page. I think the WaPo article explains the problem well—that people are misinterpreting "immunity" to mean 100% protection. I thought this was an excellent observation by the author:

The irony of all of this is that the theories about what the change really means actually reinforce the idea that it's probably better to use "protection" than "immunity" — given that people don't seem to understand what "immunity" actually means.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best,  
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Vaccine Task Force (VTF) | Communications, CDC-INFO

COVID-19 Pandemic Response | [eocevent546@cdc.gov](mailto:eocevent546@cdc.gov)

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**From:** Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, September 10, 2021 8:25 AM

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Subject: RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Oh, awesome!! Thank you for being so on top of this!! (b)(5) We'll let you know if we hear any feedback through CDCINFO.

Thank you!!  
Lauren

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Sorry responded too early.

(b)(5)

Rosie, I'll let you take it from here.

Alycia



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Subject: RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

(b)(5)

I'll follow-up with him.

(b)(5)

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Hey Lauren:

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(b)(6)

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(b)(5)

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To: [cdc@panix.com](mailto:cdc@panix.com)

Subject: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

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Senior reporter  
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In truth, though, medical experts have long said that no vaccine, including the coronavirus vaccines, is 100 percent effective. If "immunity" connotes complete protection, then no vaccine actually provides it.

Part of the reason people seem to believe immunity means 100 percent protection stems from how it's understood in other contexts. Legally speaking, immunity from things like prosecution means you can't be prosecuted, full stop. But in a medical contexts, it's often used as a synonym for a specific type of protection -- i.e. the same word the CDC now uses.

The Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary defines immunity as "a condition of being able to resist a particular disease." Taber's Medical Dictionary defines it as, "Protection from diseases, [especially] from infectious diseases." Harvard's medical dictionary defines it as, "The body's ability to resist infection and disease." The Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary echoes all of them, saying immunity is "the body's ability to resist infection."

(These definitions, it bears noting, have not been changed recently.)

The data clearly shows the coronavirus vaccines meet these definitions of providing immunity, as do other vaccines with less than 100 percent efficacy. Those include the flu vaccines, whose efficacy is generally around 40 percent. The flu vaccines are still vaccines and still provide immunity -- just not complete immunity.

And to the extent this is some supposed grand conspiracy to move the goal posts on the coronavirus vaccines, it would also be a very incomplete one. Throughout its website, the CDC still refers to the coronavirus vaccines providing immunity:

- \* On a page debunking myths about the coronavirus vaccines, which was updated this week, it still says, "After getting vaccinated, you develop immunity to that disease."
- \* On another page devoted to explaining the coronavirus vaccines, it uses "protection" and "immunity" as synonyms multiple times, saying, "It typically takes 2 weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19."
- \* On another page: "COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19 without us having to get the illness."

The irony of all of this is that the theories about what the change really means actually reinforce the idea that it's probably better to use "protection" than "immunity" -- given that people don't seem to understand what "immunity" actually means.

Advertisement

Others, though, seem to be deliberately obfuscating. On Wednesday, the same day Attkisson's website suggested that the change was made because perhaps the vaccines don't "provide immunity," it updated another post acknowledging that immunity is indeed a relative term.

Of course, it did so in the service of making another argument Massie and others have focused on: that the immunity from infection provides more protection than, in its own words, "vaccine-induced immunity."

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Mon, 16 Aug 2021 19:16:10 +0000  
**To:** Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR); LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR); St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR)  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR); Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Jacquie is adding (b)(5)

(b)(5) Thank you all.

Alycia

---

**From:** Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <llx2@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 16, 2021 1:45 PM  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>; LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <lox3@cdc.gov>; St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <ibx9@cdc.gov>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <qvl8@cdc.gov>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Hi Alycia,

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Best,  
Andrew

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 4:35 PM  
**To:** Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>; LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>; St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Do you all have recommended updates for the content?



(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Alycia

---

**From:** Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 3:47 PM

**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>; LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>; St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>

**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Hi Alycia,

People have been asking us if COVID-19 vaccines are not technically vaccines. They often cite that page as CDC's definition for what counts as a vaccine. Here are a few examples (more in the attached spreadsheets):

- Is it true that this shot for Covid is not actually a vaccine per your definition? Does this shot make you immune to the Covid virus? If not, why should I get the shot?
- Reading the CDC's definition of vaccine is says "...to produce immunity to a specific disease..." Everything you read today says this shot doesn't give you immunity but helps a person fight off the infection. Our question is how is the CDC and the rest of the world allowed to call the shot a vaccination when it doesn't even meet your own definition
- <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm> The definition of the word vaccine used on this page states that a vaccine produces immunity. Further, immunity is defined as being exposed to it (the pathogen) without becoming infected. There are several vaccines, including the new COVID vaccines that do not produce immunity as defined. Would it be possible for you to update the page to be more clear on the definition of a vaccine? I was directed to this page by someone attempting to use it as proof that the EUA COVID vaccines are not really vaccines since they do not provide immunity as defined on the linked page. Hopefully this can help clear up some disinformation that has been spread during the pandemic.
- Please update the definition of vaccine on your website found at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm> People are citing this as proof that the mRNA vaccines are not really vaccines. The definition needs to include new technological advances (miriam webster has done this). Thanks
- Right-wing covid-19 pandemic deniers are using your "vaccine" definition to argue that mRNA vaccines are not vaccines: Here is the definition from the CDC website: Vaccine: A product that stimulates a person's immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the

person from that disease. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but can also be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose. The phrase "to produce immunity" was interpreted to mean "complete" or "perfect" immunity. This was twisted to claim that the existing covid-19 vaccines were not vaccines because they only prevented severe illness. I think it would be more accurate to say that a vaccine function is "to stimulate an immune response" to be clear that perfect immunity is not what defines a vaccine.

Best,  
Andrew

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**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 3:29 PM  
**To:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>; St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Yes, there are a few of these pages we are reviewing.

What are the questions coming in?

Alycia

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**From:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 2:56 PM  
**To:** St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>; Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Adding Alycia – Alycia we've talked about this page/section of pages recently. See below.

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**From:** St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 2:53 PM  
**To:** LaRocque, Marcie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[lox3@cdc.gov](mailto:lox3@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Who owns this page?

Marcie, who own this page- [Immunization Basics | CDC](#)?

**JACQUIE ST JAMES, MPH** | Web Designer/ UX Writer

Peraton | Health Protection Solutions  
Contractor for NCIRD  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
O: 404-498-2683 | C: 404-502-4231 | [ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)

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**From:** Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[xap3@cdc.gov](mailto:xap3@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Friday, August 13, 2021 2:49 PM  
**To:** St James, Jacqueline N. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[ibx9@cdc.gov](mailto:ibx9@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Ponder, Marilyn (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[qvl8@cdc.gov](mailto:qvl8@cdc.gov)>; Lowndes, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) (CTR) <[llx2@cdc.gov](mailto:llx2@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Who owns this page?

Hi Jacquie,

(b)(5) (b)(5)  
(b)(5)

Thank you!  
Lauren

Lauren Witbart | M.Ed. | Ed.S. | MPH  
[NCIRD](#) | [HCSO](#)  
VTF | [Data Unit](#)



**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD)  
**Sent:** Wed, 1 Sep 2021 16:06:36 +0000  
**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** FW: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Alycia – just an FYI.  
Stay tuned.

(b)(5)

---

**From:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <aok2@cdc.gov>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 11:10 AM  
**To:** MacNeil, Jessica R. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <aji8@cdc.gov>; Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <vxm4@cdc.gov>  
**Cc:** Cohn, Amanda (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <anc0@cdc.gov>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Thank you!

Andrew

Andrew Kroger MD, MPH  
Communication and Education Branch  
Immunization Services Division  
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Roybal Campus  
1600 Clifton Road, M/S A-19  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

---

**From:** MacNeil, Jessica R. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[aji8@cdc.gov](mailto:aji8@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 10:23 AM  
**To:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[aok2@cdc.gov](mailto:aok2@cdc.gov)>; Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** Cohn, Amanda (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[anc0@cdc.gov](mailto:anc0@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Hi Andrew,

You are correct. The October agenda will be really tight with seven work groups requesting votes. (b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

I am happy to help facilitate that whenever you are ready.

Thanks,  
Jessica

---

**From:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[aok2@cdc.gov](mailto:aok2@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 1, 2021 8:32 AM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>  
**Cc:** MacNeil, Jessica R. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[aji8@cdc.gov](mailto:aji8@cdc.gov)>; Cohn, Amanda (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[anc0@cdc.gov](mailto:anc0@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5)

Andrew

Andrew Kroger MD, MPH  
Communication and Education Branch  
Immunization Services Division  
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Roybal Campus  
1600 Clifton Road, M/S A-19  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

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**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 4:05 PM  
**To:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[aok2@cdc.gov](mailto:aok2@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Thanks – just to confirm this definition would cover mRNA vaccines?

---

**From:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[aok2@cdc.gov](mailto:aok2@cdc.gov)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 4:01 PM

**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Here is ACIP's definition.

**Vaccine.** A suspension of live (usually attenuated) or inactivated microorganisms (e.g., bacteria or viruses) or fractions thereof administered to induce immunity and prevent infectious disease or its sequelae. Some vaccines contain highly defined antigens (e.g., the polysaccharide of *Haemophilus influenzae* type b or the surface antigen of hepatitis B); others have antigens that are complex or incompletely defined (e.g., *Bordetella pertussis* antigens or live, attenuated viruses).

[ACIP Appx 1: Glossary for Guidelines for Immunization | CDC](#)

This is revised (not identical) to the one at [Vaccine Glossary of Terms | CDC](#)

Andrew Kroger MD, MPH  
Communication and Education Branch  
Immunization Services Division  
National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases  
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention  
Roybal Campus  
1600 Clifton Road, M/S A-19  
Atlanta, GA 30329-4027

---

**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 3:02 PM

**To:** Kroger, Andrew (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[aok2@cdc.gov](mailto:aok2@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** FW: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Andrew – another definition for you to confirm/edit. Thanks!

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 2:55 PM

**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

That one comes from the [Vaccine Glossary of Terms | CDC](#)

---

**From:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Tuesday, August 31, 2021 2:48 PM

**To:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** FW: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5)

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <[gfy4@cdc.gov](mailto:gfy4@cdc.gov)>

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2021 4:22 PM

**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

(b)(5)

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)

**Sent:** Wednesday, August 25, 2021 8:25 AM

**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>

**Subject:** RE: Need to update vaccine definition on website

Hi Valerie,

I know you are busy so I really appreciate your help.

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Thank you!

Currently posted:

**Vaccine:** A product that stimulates a person's immune system to produce immunity to a specific disease, protecting the person from that disease. Vaccines are usually administered through needle injections, but can also be administered by mouth or sprayed into the nose.

Update to:

(b)(5)

---

**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Thursday, August 19, 2021 11:56 AM  
**To:** Morelli, Valerie (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/ISD) <[vxm4@cdc.gov](mailto:vxm4@cdc.gov)>  
**Subject:** Need to update vaccine definition on website

Hi Valerie,

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Cynthia and Allison Fisher have both reviewed but I would really appreciate your help with this.

Alycia



**From:** Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Sent:** Fri, 10 Sep 2021 12:32:16 +0000  
**To:** Jorgensen, Cynthia (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD); Fisher, Allison Michelle (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
**Subject:** FW: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

WaPo article at the bottom about our updating vaccine and vaccination definitions...

-----Original Message-----

From: Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>  
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 8:26 AM  
To: Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>; Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>  
Cc: CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <eocevent546@cdc.gov>; Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <yhb3@cdc.gov>  
Subject: RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Kate is out today. Andrew, when you get in can you weight in on what you see in CDCINFO and the definitions on

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/imz-basics.htm>

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/immunity-types.htm> - this page is being assessed as well. Any feedback from CDCINFO on this as well?

-----Original Message-----

From: Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 8:23 AM  
To: Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>; Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>  
Cc: CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <eocevent546@cdc.gov>; Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <yhb3@cdc.gov>  
Subject: RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

-----Original Message-----

From: Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>  
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 8:22 AM  
To: Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>; Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>  
Cc: CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <eocevent546@cdc.gov>; Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <yhb3@cdc.gov>  
Subject: RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Oh, awesome!! Thank you for being so on top of this!! (b)(5) We'll let you know if we hear any feedback through CDCINFO.



Thank you!!  
Lauren

-----Original Message-----

From: Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 8:19 AM  
To: Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>  
Cc: CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <eocevent546@cdc.gov>; Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <yhb3@cdc.gov>  
Subject: RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Sorry responded too early.

(b)(5)

Rosie, I'll let you take it from here.

Alycia

-----Original Message-----

From: Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD)  
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 8:03 AM  
To: Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>; Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>  
Cc: CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <eocevent546@cdc.gov>; Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <yhb3@cdc.gov>  
Subject: RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

(b)(5)

I'll follow-up with him.

(b)(5)

-----Original Message-----

From: Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>  
Sent: Friday, September 10, 2021 7:54 AM  
To: Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>  
Cc: CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <eocevent546@cdc.gov>; Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <yhb3@cdc.gov>; Downs, Alycia E. (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <gfy4@cdc.gov>  
Subject: RE: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Hey Lauren:

Yes, absolutely, we can prioritize reviewing the definitions page. Related, we have a team member reviewing <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/vac-gen/immunity-types.htm> -- so please let us know if you all have recommendations for updating that page.

(b)(5)

and will be back in pocket Tuesday afternoon. Let me know if I need to get this moving in our queue before then.

Thanks. Rosie.

-----Original Message-----

From: Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>  
Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2021 6:15 PM  
To: Bretthauer-Mueller, Rosemary (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <zhk0@cdc.gov>  
Cc: CDC IMS 2019 NCOV Response VTF CDC INFO Comms Inquiries <eocevent546@cdc.gov>; Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <yhb3@cdc.gov>  
Subject: FW: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Hi Rosie, How goes it?

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

(b)(5)

Many thanks,  
Lauren

-----Original Message-----

From: Grusich, Katherina (Kate) (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <yhb3@cdc.gov>  
Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2021 5:24 PM  
To: Witbart, Lauren Ann (CDC/DDID/NCIRD/OD) <xap3@cdc.gov>  
Subject: FW: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

This is what I was talking about earlier

-----Original Message-----

From: Mike Cooper <mcooper@panix.com>  
Sent: Thursday, September 9, 2021 4:25 PM  
To: cdc@panix.com  
Subject: WashPost: Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

Vaccine skeptics claim a new CDC gotcha moment -- but they haven't got much

By Aaron Blake  
Senior reporter  
Today at 12:10 p.m. EDT

The forces seeking to undermine both the coronavirus vaccines and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's handling of them have landed on a new gotcha moment.

Rep. Thomas Massie (R-Ky.) has been one of Congress's biggest critics of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the vaccination push. An intern recently resigned from his office over the congressman comparing vaccine "passports" to the Holocaust. (Massie later deleted the tweet.)

On Wednesday, Massie elevated something others had noticed in the days

prior: that the CDC had updated a definition of "vaccination" on one of its webpages. As of late August, the page described vaccination as "The act of introducing a vaccine into the body to produce immunity to a specific disease" (emphasis ours). The definition has since been changed from producing "immunity" to producing "protection."

"Check out @CDCgov's evolving definition of 'vaccination,' " Massie said. He then dropped another comparison -- to George Orwell's 1984: "They've been busy at the Ministry of Truth."

The tweet has gone somewhat viral, with more than 9,000 retweets and more than 19,000 likes. Other social media posts noting the change have also been shared widely among the vaccine-skeptic community.

The idea is that the CDC is watering down the definition of vaccination in response to the coronavirus vaccines proving less effective against infection from the delta variant than previously. (The vaccines, however, remain very good at preventing serious cases and hospitalizations.).

"After the Covid-19 vaccines were introduced, and it was discovered they do not necessarily 'prevent disease' or 'provide immunity,' " says the website of longtime vaccine skeptic and former CBS News journalist Sharyl Attkisson, "CDC altered the definition of vaccines again to say that they merely 'produce protection.' "

Massie responded to a critic by stating that "the goal posts have moved." Some have even suggested that the definition needed to be changed to still consider the coronavirus vaccines to be vaccines at all.

It's interesting that the CDC changed the Web page. But as for the conclusions being drawn about its significance? Those leave a lot to be desired, and they rest upon continual misrepresentations and misunderstandings of what vaccination and "immunity" are supposed to mean.

From the start of the vaccination campaigns, critics have searched long and hard for evidence that the vaccines don't work as well as they were supposed to. This has sometimes involved suggesting that anything less than 100 percent efficacy means they don't work.

In truth, though, medical experts have long said that no vaccine, including the coronavirus vaccines, is 100 percent effective. If "immunity" connotes complete protection, then no vaccine actually provides it.

Part of the reason people seem to believe immunity means 100 percent protection stems from how it's understood in other contexts. Legally speaking, immunity from things like prosecution means you can't be prosecuted, full stop. But in a medical contexts, it's often used as a synonym for a specific type of protection -- i.e. the same word the CDC now uses.

The Merriam-Webster Medical Dictionary defines immunity as "a condition of being able to resist a particular disease." Taber's Medical



Dictionary defines it as, "Protection from diseases, [especially] from infectious diseases." Harvard's medical dictionary defines it as, "The body's ability to resist infection and disease." The Oxford Concise Medical Dictionary echoes all of them, saying immunity is "the body's ability to resist infection."

(These definitions, it bears noting, have not been changed recently.)

The data clearly shows the coronavirus vaccines meet these definitions of providing immunity, as do other vaccines with less than 100 percent efficacy. Those include the flu vaccines, whose efficacy is generally around 40 percent. The flu vaccines are still vaccines and still provide immunity -- just not complete immunity.

And to the extent this is some supposed grand conspiracy to move the goal posts on the coronavirus vaccines, it would also be a very incomplete one. Throughout its website, the CDC still refers to the coronavirus vaccines providing immunity:

- \* On a page debunking myths about the coronavirus vaccines, which was updated this week, it still says, "After getting vaccinated, you develop immunity to that disease."
- \* On another page devoted to explaining the coronavirus vaccines, it uses "protection" and "immunity" as synonyms multiple times, saying, "It typically takes 2 weeks after vaccination for the body to build protection (immunity) against the virus that causes COVID-19."
- \* On another page: "COVID-19 vaccines help our bodies develop immunity to the virus that causes COVID-19 without us having to get the illness."

The irony of all of this is that the theories about what the change really means actually reinforce the idea that it's probably better to use "protection" than "immunity" -- given that people don't seem to understand what "immunity" actually means.

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Others, though, seem to be deliberately obfuscating. On Wednesday, the same day Attkisson's website suggested that the change was made because perhaps the vaccines don't "provide immunity," it updated another post acknowledging that immunity is indeed a relative term.

Of course, it did so in the service of making another argument Massie and others have focused on: that the immunity from infection provides more protection than, in its own words, "vaccine-induced immunity."